



A CASE STUDY ON THE VICTIMS OF DOMESTIC VIOLENCE IN ASSAM WITH SPECIAL REFERENCE TO EDUCATED WOMEN

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ABSTRACT

Present study aims at- (i) To identify the various factors of Crime against women (ii) To examine the educational and economic background of the victims of domestic violence and (iii) To suggest policy measures to control or minimize domestic violence. The reason behind selecting these objectives is that in a democratic society, Domestic Violence is always considered as human rights violation. Domestic violation has no age, no religion, no gender and no socio-economic status. It may take place at any time, within any family of any religion. But from general observations it is to say that Violence or crime against women has always been increasing in every country of the world because of which Human Rights is becoming a popular issue among the common masses. Educated women are specially emphasised in this paper as educated women cannot express or share easily their painful experience with others. Educated women are always conscious about their social status. They have fear of losing self-respect, if they use to share their beater/painful experiences getting from in-laws or from husbands. A few years back, the 3rd National Family Health Survey (NFH-III) reveals that over 37 per cent married India women are victims of physical or sexual abuse by their husbands and over 40 per cent of Indian women have experienced domestic violence at some point in their married life. Different Research Studies show that present education system is not in a position to stop domestic violence against women. So, it is the moral responsibility of every person of a civil society to think over the pervasiveness of this serious issue from educational and sociological point of view.

KEY WORDS: Domestic Violence, Human Rights, Education, Women.

Introduction

In this patriarchal society, not a single day passes without papers reporting violation of human rights against woman. The problem of violence within a home or in one's family life is termed as Domestic Violence. This violence is towards someone, who we are in a relationship with may be it a wife, husband, son, daughter, mother, father, grandparent or any other family member. It can be a male's or a female's atrocities towards another male or a female. Anyone can be a victim and a victimizer. This violence has a tendency to batter the counterpart in various forms such as physical, sexual or emotional. It may take place at any time, within any family of any religion. But from general observations it is to say that Violence or crime against women has always been increasing in every country of the world because of which Human Rights is becoming a popular issue among the common masses.

Domestic violence has been deeply rooted in all the parts of the country since time immemorial. Today also a working Indian woman may drop out from work place because of the ill-treatment at home or at office. She may lose her efficiency in work. Her health may deteriorate if she is not well physically and mentally. Their survival becomes difficult and painful when they have to work hard for earning two meals a day. As a result separation and divorce cases are becoming very common case in the modern society. Therefore, in the present paper, an attempt has been undertaken to study the Domestic Violence against Educated Women in Assam.

Statement of the Problem

In India in the year 2013 only, more than 8,000 women were killed in dowry-related crimes, and more than 100,000 were victims of cruelty by their husbands or male relatives. (According to Crime in India 2013, a report published by India's National Crime Records Bureau (NCRB), which is part of the Ministry of Home Affairs). Data reflects that domestic violence is assaulting thousands of people in the country. So, realizing the depth of the issue present problem has been stated as- "A CASE STUDY ON THE VICTIMS OF DOMESTIC VIOLENCE IN ASSAM WITH SPECIAL REFERENCE TO EDUCATED WOMEN"

Significance of the Study

"Domestic Violence" is one of the most sensitive issues of every society and violence against women is now very significantly recognized as human right abuse. It is always the women who have to be in the tight rope, subject to inequality and looked down as an inferior sex in the society. Starting from childhood to the end of her life a woman she may be literate or illiterate has to be under the control of father or husband or the son. The extreme form such control can spark the violence within the four walls of homes at any time. So, this need to be analysed carefully and study of those factors causing the violence may prevent a family suffering from the menace of domestic violence.

Again, domestic violence is recognized as the significant barriers of the empowerment of women. It adversely affects the women's health, their healthy behaviour and their adoption of small family norm. In India comprehensive household data on the prevalence and costs of domestic violence are lacking. Therefore,

present study is an attempt to analyse the domestic violence as a violation of human rights against educated women. Discussing the cases of four Victims of domestic violation an appeal is done to all esteemed academicians to rethink again and again before taking any decision which may lead to a panic life for a woman or in the entire family.

Objectives of the Study

Present study aims at-

- (i) To identify the various factors of domestic violence against women
- (ii) To examine the educational and socio-economic backgrounds of the victims of domestic violence and
- (iii) To suggest policy measures to control or minimize domestic violence.

Operational Definitions of the Key Concepts

Human Rights:

Human Rights are those rights which every individual requires to survive peacefully in any society as a consequence of being human.

Domestic Violence:

Domestic Violence is a violent victimization of women within the boundaries of family usually by husband or by any other member of the family. Domestic violence includes wife battering, dowry harassment, dowry death, sexual abuse, emotional abuse, verbal abuse, forms of murder, female infanticide, cruelty to women driving them to commit suicide etc. It can be both physical and psychological. Psychological violence indicates threat or aggressive behaviour towards the women, use of sounds that are inflicted on the mind are difficult to accept and adjust, it decreases self-confidence, disturbs in maintaining self-respect.

Educated Women:

In the present paper, educated women refers to those female who have minimum matriculate level educational qualification.

Review of Related Literature

Chaudhary, (2013) states that human rights and poverty, both are inter-related issue. Of course, there is organic interface between the two in the negative sense because poverty and violation of human rights go hand in hand but poverty is not the only manifestation of violation of human rights. The causative factors contributing to the gross violation of human rights are both historical and contextual as well as global and local in nature.

Sahoo, H and Pradhan, M. R. (2010) conducted a study on "Domestic Violence in India: An Empirical Analysis". The analysis shows that the women belonging to low socio-economic status are more likely to agree with the different reasons justifying wife-beating. Again domestic violence is more among lower autonomy and women belonging to low socio-economic status.

Saikia, J.P. (2010) studied "A Spousal Violence and Gender Issue: A Sociological Understanding of 5 (Five) Case Studies of Wife Battering in Rural Assam".

The study found that wife battering as a spousal violence was connected with liquor consumption, extra-marital affairs and financial crisis.

Behera (2006) observes that in all societies, to a greater or lesser degree, women and girls are subject to physical, sexual and psychological abuse that cuts across lines of income, class and culture

Ahlawat Neerja (2005) conducted a study, "Domestic Violence against Women: Emerging concerns in Rural Haryana". In this study, violence against women is viewed as any action, policy or attitude which dehumanizes one in society. Pertinent questions were raised here- (i) Can Domestic violence be tackled without addressing the basic question of inequality and patriarchy?; (ii) What is the prevalence and nature of violence?; (iii) How do women react to it and what are their attitudes towards domestic violence? The observations were- serious consequences of domestic violence resulting in physical pain, mental and psychological anxiety leading to several such problems like lack of confidence, insecurity, fatigue, poor self image, depression and desire to commit suicide. Women do not raise voice against inhuman treatment economic insecurity, social stigma attached with separation are some of the important factors that force women to bear domestic violence. For the sake of their children women are prepared to tolerate anything. Moreover women are also discouraged to come back to their parent's home as it would bring a bad name to whole family. Another significant observation regarding domestic violence is that it is never recognized or reported. It was concluded that domestic violence needs to be tackled with greater sensitivity as a part of women's empowerment programme. Women will never escape violence as long as they are uneducated, remain financially dependent and derive their social status exclusively from their role as a wife and mother. The socio-economic and cultural factors that perpetrate violence against women will have to be identified and eliminated in order to address this sensitive social issue. There is urgency to change the belief system, e.g. that women is the possession of a man, that he can correct her behaviour, hitting is an appropriate way to discipline her, that man's honour is linked to women's sexual behaviour, that family matter are private and that it inappropriate for others to intervene. The need of the hour is to launch an awareness campaign rigorously, where such issues can be raised and discussed to change the mindset of people which will help women gain greater control over their own bodies, over economic and family resources, over the number of children and spacing among them and over their gives in general.

Research approach undertaken:

Present study is an attempt of understanding and analysing the problem of domestic violence against women as a sociological phenomenon. Case study was carried out on five (5) victimized married educated women in lower Assam belonging to Kamrup and Nalbari District. Cases were selected through convenient sampling procedure.

The investigator spent sufficient time with the respondents to understand their problems seriously and collected responses with the help of observation and interview technique.

Analysis and Findings

Objective wise analysis and findings are presented below-

Findings related to Objective-I

Over the years, the forms or nature of domestic violence has been changed. The present nature of domestic violence against women is Physical, Psychological and Anti-social which are reflected with the help of the following contributing factors-

- (i) Desire to gain or to control over a woman by family member
- (ii) Doubt of love affair before marriage
- (iii) Birth of girl child repeatedly
- (iv) Sexual difficulties
- (v) Low job satisfaction of husband
- (vi) the desire to exploit someone for personal benefits
- (vii) Dissatisfaction with dowries
- (viii) Old age women from sons
- (ix) Conservative Mindset of society's people
- (x) Taking Alcohol, drugs, etc.
- (xi) Infertility in women
- (xii) Superstitious belief
- (xiii) Financial crisis & Unemployment condition
- (xiv) Wife's absence in house till the ending of the day due to their job/work
- (xv) Anti-social personality disorders

After all, the subordinate status of women combined with socio cultural norms that are inclined towards patriarchy and masculinity can be considered as an

important factor determining the domestic violence.

Findings related to Objective-II

The educational and socio-economic backgrounds of the studied cases are –

Case I Dr. Anannya Sarma: Dr A. Sarma (Teacher) of 37 years age is a highly educated woman having MA, M.Phil and Ph. D. Degree in Assamese from Nalbari district. She is from a middle class educated Brahmin family who decided to get marry as per family choice. At the time of her marriage she was pursuing Ph. D in Gauhati University. Her husband was practicing law privately in Guwahati High Court(Advocate). Since the very beginning of her marriage life, the husband was continuously insulted without finding any fault or drawback in her. He used to give punishment to Anannya not only physically but also psychologically and economically. He was not a drunken person but a man having silent extra-marital affairs. As per suggestions of well wishers, she conceived for a baby, expecting violence can decrease but surprisingly punishments from husband were increasing gradually. One day she came back to parent's home and staying there with her 5 years only daughter.

Case II Ms. Ranjita Kakoti: Ms. R. Kakoti (M.A., B.Ed.) of 38 years age is now a high school teacher in Nalbari district. She got married informally to her boyfriend 13 years back against her family choice. At that time she was doing B. Ed. without engaging in any job. Her husband was a Medical Representative in a company. But after their marriage she was little happy with her husband as he was a regular drinker. He used to beat Ranjita at night regularly without any cause after taking drinks. They had a boy child who always observed those situations though she tried to keep aside this incident from the child. Because of their quarrels, they had to change their rent house frequently. But no way was there to stop those incidents. Ultimately, Ranjita decided to take legal action against her husband. Now She is living separately with her boy for last 7 years in Nalbari.

Case III Ms. Juhi Boruah: Ms. J. Boruah a 42 years lady of Kamrup District, B.A in Political Science is presently working as a Supervisor in Social Welfare department of Assam Government. She got married to an Agricultural Officer according to her parent's choice just after completion of graduation. Her husband was a very handsome with normal behaviour with all other people except Juhi. According to her, the husband was a Psycho who did not tolerate any male guest from wife's family and tortured her physically as well as mentally very frequently at any cause at any time. She got a baby (girl) after 2 years of marriage and one day the husband thrown the baby from bed. Juhi was shocked and came back to parent's home. Now this her daughter has appeared in HSLC examination with good preparation.

Case IV Ms. Bhoni Kalita: She is from Guwahati, a very brilliant girl of 31 years age having M.Tech degree belonging to a good economic family background. She got arranged marriage 5 years back as per family choice and the husband is working as an assistant professor in a university. Since the very beginning day of the married life, her in-laws are against her further study and giving mental torture always for nothing. Ms. Bhoni is treated as dull student by in laws and now she lost her self-confidence, self respect everything which are essential for a higher study. She is still pursuing Ph.D. struggling a lot without getting support from her in-laws and even from her husband also.

Case V Ms. Majani Thakuria: Presently Ms Thakuria is running a Beauty Parlor in Guwahati who is of 42 years age. Just after completion of HS examination, she started married life with a Government J.E. as per parent's choice and decision. But he was a drinker who used to beat his wife frequently if she does not help him in taking drinks with kitchen made nasta. Ms. Thakuria felt that she lost self respect, prestige, values everything to her husband. She came back to parent's home with her only kid after 10 years of her wedding ceremony.

After analysis of all the cases, it is to mention that educated women are also victimized from domestic violence like uneducated. Economic crisis was not a factor in any family. So, we cannot say education and economic independence can solve the problem. The need is adjustment and understanding between husband and wife. In order to control or minimize domestic violence, the urgent need is to change the mindset of common people and a positive attitude towards each member of the family.

Findings related to Objective-iii

Policy Recommendations:

- (i) Training for attitude building among all kinds of people in society
- (ii) Women must be made aware about legislations, legal provisions, rights and entitlements from the very beginning of their school life
- (iii) Training of teachers for all levels to impart effectively Human Rights Education from the very beginning day of child.
- (iv) The vigorous lobbying of NGOs is needed for the policy advocacy.
- (v) Training and professional development is essential for professionals who come into contact with women subjected to violence

- (vi) Strengthening capacity of government and non-government organizations personnel for addressing the issue of domestic violence against women is the need of hour.
- (vii) Public awareness programmes should be carefully designed and coherently oriented. In order to accomplish this, networks between different organizations, between activists, and between state officers need to be strengthened.
- (viii) Special Mobile courts should be introduced as an effective strategy for reaching out to more and more victims in the remote areas.
- (ix) A massive awareness campaign involving the community, religious leaders, women's organizations, civil societies, NGOs and other opinion makers is necessary to counter the present trend of domestic violence against women
- (x) State must actively intervene to protect women's social, political, economic and cultural rights and withdraw restrictive legal and administrative provisions, which tend to weaken their rights in practice.

Conclusion:

Through the present paper an appeal is done to all academicians, NGO workers, policy makers, social workers and community people to think thousand times before taking any decisions which can lead to domestic violence directly or indirectly. The urgent need is felt the practices of value based education everywhere and to change the stereotyped mindset of all concerned. It is revealed from the study that only education and economic sufficiency cannot stop domestic violence. If all the members of a family do not pursue human values, domestic violence will go a long way to kill the peace of mind of everyone. So, the need is to change the mindset for stopping inequality which will lead to justice for everyone.

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